REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

Claims 42-59 and 90-93 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, Applicants AMEND claims 42, 44, 53, and 57 and ADD new claims 90-93.

Support for new claims 90 and 91 can be found, for example, in lines 3-6 on page 26 in Applicants' originally filed specification; support for the amendment to claim 44 and new claim 92 can be found, for example, in lines 13-14 on page 16 and lines 6-8 on page 17 of Applicants' originally filed specification; and support for new claim 93 can be found, for example, in original claims 52-54 and Fig. 1(a) of Applicants' originally filed drawings.

Applicants' representative greatly appreciates the Examiner extending the courtesy of the telephone interview on January 24, 2007. During the telephone interview, the Examiner further explained how the features of claims 42 and 57 were interpreted by the Examiner, and how these features were allegedly anticipated by the printed circuit board disclosed by Gebhardt et al. (U.S. 5,928,767).

Claims 42-50, 52, 53, and 56 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Gebhardt et al. Claims 51, 54, 55, and 57-59 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gebhardt et al.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections of claims 42-59.

Claim 42 has been amended to recite:

> A decorative sheet comprising:
> a deformable base member having first and second principal surfaces opposed to each other;
> **a continuous decoration layer provided directly on the first principal surface of the base member and having a pattern area representing a predetermined pattern, the decoration layer being defined by an ink layer that is visible from a direction perpendicular to a plane including the ink layer**; and
> **a spread suppressing member provided at a location corresponding to the pattern area on the side of the first principal surface or on the side of the second principal surface of the base member, for suppressing the spreading of the pattern area**; wherein
> **the spread suppressing member is arranged so as to overlap only a portion of the base member and is made of a material that suppresses the spreading of the pattern area of the decoration layer**.

(emphasis added)

Applicants' claim 57 recites features that are similar to the features recited in Applicants' claim 42, including the above-emphasized features.

The Examiner alleged that Gebhardt et al. teach a decorative sheet as recited in Applicants' claims 42 and 57, including the features of a decoration layer and a spread suppressing member.

Applicants' claims 42 and 57 have been amended to recite the features of "a continuous decoration layer provided directly on the first principal surface of the base member and having a pattern area representing a predetermined pattern, the decoration layer being defined by an ink layer that is visible from a direction perpendicular to a plane including the ink layer," "a spread suppressing member provided at a location corresponding to the pattern area on the side of the first principal surface or on the side of the second principal surface of the base member, for suppressing the spreading of the pattern area of the decoration layer," and "the spread suppressing member is arranged so as to overlap only a portion of the base member and is made of a material that suppresses the spreading of the pattern area of the decoration layer." Support for these features is found, for example, in lines 6-7 on page 15 and lines 6-9 on page 23 of Applicants' originally filed specification and in Fig. 1(a) of Applicants' originally filed drawings.

Gebhardt et al. teach a printed circuit board including a supporting layer 22 which the Examiner alleged corresponds to the base layer, a resin film 6 which the Examiner alleged corresponds to the decoration layer, and a foil 5' which the Examiner alleged corresponds to the spread suppressing member. Applicants respectfully disagree.

First, the resin film 6 shown in Fig. 1d of Gebhardt et al. is not a *continuous* layer, as recited in Applicants' claims 42 and 57. The foil 5' of Gebhardt et al. separates the resin film 6 into separate, independent, and discrete portions where the foil 5' contacts the supporting layer 22. Although the resin film 6 shown in Fig. 1c of Gebhardt et al. is a continuous layer, the foil 5, 5' in Fig. 1c of Gebhardt et al. does not *overlap only a portion* of the supporting layer 22, as recited in Applicants' claims 42 and 57. That is,

the foil 5, 5' of Gebhardt et al. completely overlaps the supporting layer 22.

Second, the resin film 6 of Gebhardt et al. is disclosed as being a dielectric thermosetting resin, *not an ink layer*, as recited in Applicants' claims 42 and 57. Clearly, an ink layer would not provide the necessary structural rigidity to the printed circuit board of Gebhardt et al. Furthermore, the resin film 6 of Gebhardt et al. is certainly not visible from a direction perpendicular to a plane including the resin film 6 since the resin film 6 of Gebhardt et al. is completely covered on one side by the supporting layer 22, and on the other side by the foil 5, 5'. The Examiner indicated in the telephone interview on January 24, 2007 that the term "decoration layer" is not given patentable weight as any layer could be deemed to be "decorative." Although Applicants' disagree with this allegation, claims 42 and 57 have been amended to clarify that the decoration layer (i.e., the ink layer) of the present invention is visible from a direction perpendicular to a plane including the ink layer. Since the resin film 6 disclosed by Gebhardt et al. is not visible from a direction perpendicular to a plane including the resin film 6, the resin film 6 of Gebhardt et al. is not a decoration layer defined by an ink layer as recited in claims 42 and 57.

Lastly, the foil 5' of Gebhardt et al. cannot be fairly construed as a *spread suppressing member* because the foil material disclosed by Gebhardt et al. spreads quite easily. As clearly shown in Fig. 1d of Gebhardt et al., the foil 5, 5' is debossed to spread into the resin film 6. Thus, the foil 5, 5' of Gebhardt et al. does not function as a spread suppressing member, as alleged by the Examiner.

Thus, Gebhardt et al. fail to teach or suggest the features of "a continuous decoration layer provided directly on the first principal surface of the base member and having a pattern area representing a predetermined pattern, the decoration layer being defined by an ink layer that is visible from a direction perpendicular to a plane including the ink layer," "a spread suppressing member provided at a location corresponding to the pattern area on the side of the first principal surface or on the side of the second principal surface of the base member, for suppressing the spreading of the pattern area of the decoration layer," and "the spread suppressing member is arranged so as to

overlap only a portion of the base member and is made of a material that suppresses the spreading of the pattern area of the decoration layer," as recited in Applicants' claims 42 and 57.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 42 and 57 are allowable. Claims 43-56, 58, 59, and 90-93 depend upon claims 42 and 57, and are therefore allowable for at least the reasons that claims 42 and 57 are allowable.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are solicited.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition the Commissioner for a ONE-month extension of time, extending to February 28, 2007, the period for response to the Office Action dated October 30, 2006.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-1353.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: February 28, 2007

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